



ಸುಗ್ರಾಮ

ಗ್ರಾಮ ಪಂಚಾಯತ್ ಚುನಾಯಿತ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಪ್ರತಿನಿಧಿಗಳ ಸಂಘ-ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ (ಲಿ)

CHARTER OF DEMANDS FOR ENSURING EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF GRAM PANCHAYATS OF KARNATAKA

SUGRAMA is an association representing the rights and interests of Grama Panchayat elected women representatives of Karnataka. SUGRAMA, a membership based organization, is also a platform where women members can come together in solidarity and support each other to bring about change and advocate for people centered policies. SUGRAMA facilitated by The Hunger Project and with the support of 6 partner civil society organizations, has formed 51 Taluk associations in 17 Districts and enjoys a membership base of more than 3600 elected women representatives.

With the 73rd constitutional amendment and provision of 33% reservation for women in local self government, women have taken lead in contesting and winning elections at all three levels of decentralized governance. Of the three tier local self government structure, Grama Panchayats play a vital role in grassroot governance thereby ensuring 'power to people'. Though, Karnataka was the first state which pioneered in establishing the three tier structure, it seems to lose its credibility. Karnataka has so far seen 4 elections to the local self government structures, yet there have been several loop holes which otherwise could ensure good governance and decentralization. In the wake of the ensuing elections, we, the members of SUGRAMA would like to place the following demands which shall strengthen the Grama Panchayats:

1. Devolution of 3 Fs to Grama Panchayats – All the 29 subjects along with funds, functions and functionaries must be transferred to the Panchayat Raj Institutions based on the principle of Subsidiarity (which means that what is best done at the lower levels of government should not be centralized at higher levels). This enables in decentralization of power to the Panchayats.
2. There is a need to strengthen the planning processes at the Grama Panchayat level. The State Government should take necessary steps to enable GPs to formulate Village Development Plans/Activity Mapping.
3. Bring transparency, accountability and credibility to the functioning of Panchayat Raj Institutions through the wider usage of e-technologies and thus making the panchayats e-panchayats and enabling the community to get all the information and access the facilities through them.

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4. We demand the Government to look at formula based allocation of grants to the GPs. This can be worked out through the constitution of a panel and looking at the population and the north-south divide in the state. This will in turn help in allocation of funds to the northern districts.
5. We demand the Government to allocate considerable amount of funds as 'untied grants'. The GPs shall have the right to levy taxes from time to time and revenues generated from such taxes should be under the ambit of the GPs.
6. Implementation of the Women's Component Plan through Panchayats. There is also a need to ensure that Gender Budget Cells are set up in the Government departments at the taluk and district levels.
7. Ensure Sexual Harassment complaints committee is set up at the G P level as mandated under Vishaka Judgment of Supreme Court of India.
8. There is a need to set up a monitoring group at the taluk level which shall comprise of representatives of civil society organizations, women's groups and panchayat members to address issues of women.
9. We urge the Government to make suitable amendments to the act to ensure 50% reservation for women at Grama Panchayat level.
10. Ensure that state Government opens a toll-free help line for Panchayat women at the district & taluk levels to attend to emergent needs (adverse or otherwise) of elected women functionaries of PRIs in terms of police assistance, information dissemination, legal assistance, counseling etc., with a view to strengthen women's participation in local governance.
11. We demand that the approval of development projects, selection of beneficiaries and social audit be done by the Grama Sabhas. Grama Sabhas should be strengthened to make them 'decision makers' on all matters pertaining to the GPs. This will ensure direct democracy and participation of the community.
12. We urge the Government to amend the Act and ensure the provision of Mahila Grama Sabhas on the lines of Child Grama Sabhas.
13. We demand the need for direct elections to the post of President and Vice President for Panchayat Raj Institutions.
14. We advocate for increased honorarium for President, Vice President and Ward Members. Honorarium should increase to Rs 5000/-, Rs 3000 and Rs 2500/- respectively.
15. Reservation should be extended upto two terms for elected women functionaries as this would ensure better governance.

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